Comprehensive Research Experience for Medical Students (CREMS)
2022 Supervisor and Project Information Form

Please complete and return via email ONLY to crems.programs@utoronto.ca by February 18, 2022.

Supervisor Information

NOTE: CREMS will not support pre-determined pairings of students and supervisors. Supervisors must agree to open their projects to all students and interview all that are interested.

Name: Dr. Mark Yudin
Email: mark.yudin@unityhealth.to

Department: Obstetrics and Gynecology
Hospital/Research Institution: St. Michael’s Hospital

SGS Department(s) (if applicable):
Click or tap here to enter text.

ORCID ID (see https://orcid.org/ - If you do not have an ORCID ID we encourage you to sign up for one):
0000-0002-7540-8487

Location of Work:
St. Michael’s Hospital

Field of Research (up to 4 keywords):
Refugee; cervical cancer; colposcopy

Student contact time (number of hours per week YOU are available to the student for any concerns or to review progress):
5 hours with the PI; more hours and supervision available across the team
Project Information

NOTE: If this project is selected, this information will be posted on CREMS website for interested student applicants to view research opportunities.

PROJECT TITLE:
Exploring the differences in severity of cervical dysplasia between Ontario residents and refugees: a multi-centre study in Toronto, Ontario

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
Including background, aim(s), method(s) and significance of the project. Maximum 300 words.

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer affecting women worldwide, and over 85% of deaths from cervical cancer occur in low- and middle-income countries. Routine cervical cancer screening with pap tests is vital for disease prevention with consistent evidence showing decreased incidence of invasive disease and death due to cervical cancer. The purpose of pap testing is to detect precancerous cells of the cervix which can then be treated to prevent the development of cervix cancer. Unfortunately, most refugees in Canada have never had a pap test. Studies have consistently shown significant inequities in appropriate cervical cancer screening in Ontario with lower screening rates in immigrant and refugee groups.

While we know that refugees have lower screening rates, our study aims at exploring the potential negative impact of the gaps and delays in their care by assessing the severity of cervical dysplasia, or abnormal cell changes, when they’re referred to colposcopy, a clinic specialized in evaluation and treatment for people with abnormal paps.

The primary objective of the study is to compare the grade of dysplasia by histology at initial presentation to colposcopy clinic between patients billing through OHIP and patients billing through IFH. IFH billing will be used as a proxy for refugee status. We hypothesize that refugees present with a higher grade of cervical dysplasia compared to Ontario residents.

Once all data is collected, comparisons will be made between the severity of cervical dysplasia and colposcopy findings between patients covered by IFHP and patients covered by OHIP. Comparisons will also made between length of time from referral to initial appointment, loss to follow-up, and HPV vaccination status between patients covered by IFHP and patients covered by OHIP. Time between date of IFHP issue and date of initial pap smear will also be explored if data is available.

Is this project remote-capable (in case of new restrictions) or have an alternative remote option?
☒ Yes, remote capable
☐ No

☐ Yes, alternate remote option. Please specify (100 words max): Click or tap here to enter text.

If human subjects are involved, have the appropriate Research Ethics Board approvals been obtained?
☐ Yes
☒ No
☐ Not Applicable
If yes, please list the application submission date:

Do you expect this work will be published?
☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain / Other
Research Environment and Student Roles and Responsibilities

Please be specific as possible. Please describe the research environment, including availability of required facilities/equipment/expertise, supervisor’s experience and mentorship plans. Please clearly outline the student role(s) and responsibilities related to the project, potential educational value, and indicate who will serve as the student’s direct report for daily oversight (PI, PHD student, technician, etc.). Maximum 300 words.

The student’s responsibility will primarily be in data collection. The study is a retrospective chart review from two Toronto-based colposcopy sites, Women’s College Hospital and St. Michael’s Hospital. As such, the student will work with the team in going through charts to retrieve relevant data regarding patient demographics, risk factors, pap smear results and subsequent care plans. Colposcopy care often follows specific algorithms and the data collection phase will aid the student in learning more about cervical cancer and precancerous cervical changes as well as risk factors for cervical cancer through an intersectional lens with focus on social determinants of health.

The student may also aid in a literature review which will strengthen their understanding of both the prevention of cervical cancer and the impact of refugee status on health.

The research team consists of three obstetrician gynecologists across the sites, Dr. Mark Yudin, Dr Amanda Selk, and Dr. Rachel Spitzen, as well as an OBGYN resident, Nour Bakhache, and a research coordinator, Asmita Bhoite. The student will work closely with the resident who can act as a mentor both in obstetrics & gynecology and in research methodology. The student will also work with the co-investigators at each site during that data collection period. Asmita Bhoite is also available for all logistical and administrative support for the student.